

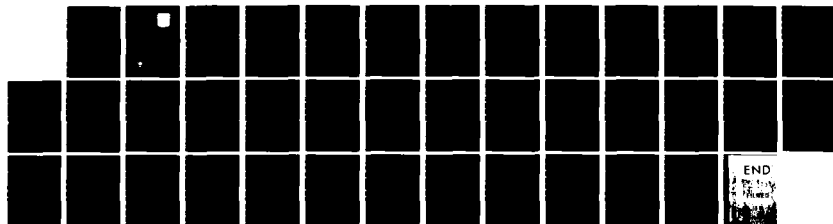
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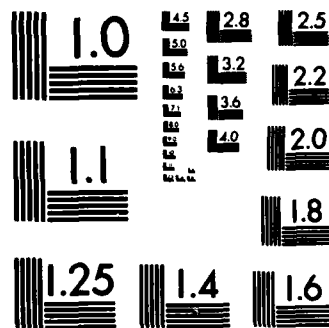
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US ARMY PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AND THE RESERVES

BY

MICHAEL W. TOTTEN
LIEUTENANT COLONEL, MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

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US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
	AD-A133374	
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) US Army Psychological Operations and the Reserves		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Individual Study Project
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) LTC Michael W. Totten		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Same		12. REPORT DATE 2 May 1983
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 31
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Not necessary to fill in.		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) United States Army Psychological Operations (PSYOP) units are the only units of their kind in the military establishment. Of the four PSYOP Groups, twelve battalions and twenty-two separate companies in the Army's inventory, however, only one group headquarters and three battalions are in the active component; the remainder are all reserve units. Since the inception of the CAPSTONE program in 1980, these reserve component units have been the focus of much concern and attention, but they continue to suffer from problems which degrade their effectiveness and limit their potential. These problems were identified and (con't)		

isolated primarily through interviews with all PSYOP Group commanders and their staffs, numerous subordinate commanders in the reserve, members of the First Special Operations Command (SOCOM) staff and members of the Department of the Army Staff with responsibility for PSYOP and related efforts. These problems are arrayed in five categories which correspond to the features of the reserve component system and of the PSYOP establishment from which they stem. The problems in each category are examined in the context of all others, and the changes or modifications necessary to solve them are specified in as much detail as possible. Where these changes appear to be beyond the capacity of the current system, interim solutions which will ameliorate the effects of the problem are suggested. The study concludes that all of the problems are soluble, and that their solution will involve a combination of systemic changes and better self-discipline on the part of the PSYOP community.

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US ARMY PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AND THE RESERVES

INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Michael W. Totten,
Military Intelligence

Colonel Alfred H. Paddock, Jr.

Study Adviser

US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
2 May 1983

ABSTRACT


AUTHOR(S): Michael W. Totten, LTC, MI

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FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 2 May 1983 **PAGES:** 31 **CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

United States Army Psychological Operations (PSYOP) units are the only units of their kind in the military establishment. Of the four PSYOP Groups, twelve battalions and twenty-two separate companies in the Army's inventory, however, only one group headquarters and three battalions are in the active component; the remainder are all reserve units. Since the inception of the CAPSTONE program in 1980, these reserve component units have been the focus of much concern and attention, but they continue to suffer from problems which degrade their effectiveness and limit their potential. These problems were identified and isolated primarily through interviews with all PSYOP Group commanders and their staffs, numerous subordinate commanders in the reserve, members of the First Special Operations Command (SOCOM) staff and members of the Department of the Army Staff with responsibility for PSYOP and related efforts. These problems are arrayed in five categories which correspond to the features of the reserve component system and of the PSYOP establishment from which they stem. The problems in each category are examined in the context of all others, and the changes or modifications necessary to solve them are specified in as much detail as possible. Where these changes appear to be beyond the capacity of the current system, interim solutions which will ameliorate the effects of the problem are suggested. The study concludes that all of the problems are soluble, and that their solution will involve a combination of systemic changes and better self-discipline on the part of the PSYOP community.



PREFACE

The suggestion which initiated this study project was provided by Colonel Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., Chairman of the Department of National and International Security Studies at the US Army War College and Commander of the 4th Psychological Operations Group from 1979 until 1982. The study is based in part on the knowledge of reserve component PSYOP unit problems acquired by the author while commanding the 6th Psychological Operations Battalion during the same period. The vast bulk of the information herein and many of the suggested changes to current systems, however, are drawn from the reserves themselves, without whose cooperation and support this study could not have been completed. The author's effort to keep the study unclassified has constrained the amount of detail that could be offered. Hopefully, this constraint does not obscure the subject. The study is intended for eventual publication in a military journal and has been formatted with that end in mind.

One of the most unsettling developments of the 1970s and 80s for the United States has been the steady decline of American military power relative to that of the Soviet Union. In virtually every major category of military effort, the United States has lagged behind the Soviets so consistently and for so long that the restoration of American military preeminence may well be unattainable. If this decline were not unsettling enough, however, it has been accompanied by two other developments which should deepen our collective anxiety. The first is, simply, that the range of Soviet actions which the United States must seek to counter or deter has multiplied. The second is that nuclear weapons, heretofore considered the centerpiece of United States deterrent strategy, have lost much of their deterrent power.¹

This, in turn, has precipitated a search for new forms of deterrence and new strategies that will permit the United States to accomplish its ends within the constraints imposed by present reality.² Strategic alternatives are now much discussed, the study of limited war is renascent and considerable thought is being given to non-military deterrents. This is good and badly needed because, as Samuel Huntington points out, the security of the United States in the future will

. . . have to rest increasingly on a superiority in strategic insight, skill, and creativity, upon the ability of the United States to outwit its opponents instead of simply out producing and out developing them.³

Huntington's conclusion should also help to focus the search for new departures. The need is clearly for some means which confers a psychological advantage in a confrontation with a more powerful opponent, something that tips the balance in favor of the more agile. One of the alternatives

is clearly psychological operations, conducted as a part of every national endeavor to regain our strategic superiority. Unfortunately, psychological operations is one of the alternatives with which the United States has traditionally been least comfortable.

This discomfort is very clearly reflected in the condition of the military psychological operations establishment. Psychological Operations, or PSYOP, was widely used in Vietnam and military assets and skills involved were increased proportionately. With the withdrawal, however, the services--particularly the Army--lost interest in the field, permitted their equipment to become obsolescent and allowed the establishment to dwindle to a shadow of its former self. At present, with the need for an efficient and skilled PSYOP establishment more pressing than it has been in a decade, that establishment is unwell, underpopulated and mostly in the Reserve Component. An urgent effort is needed to correct its problems.

This effort must not only include the PSYOP units in the Reserve Component, it must focus on them. Of the four PSYOP groups, twelve battalions and twenty-two separate companies in the Army's inventory, only one group headquarters and three battalions are in the Active Component; the remainder are all reserve units. These units have all benefited to some degree from the resurgence of interest in PSYOP which has occurred since late 1979. Some of their glaring equipment deficiencies have been filled, some of their organizational inconsistencies have been redressed, but the improvements have been selective and have not affected either the general unit population or improved its general health. The more fundamental problems, as yet unaddressed in many cases, stem in part from systemic anomalies and in part from the nature of the PSYOP establishment itself. This writing is a serious effort to articulate these problems, trace them

to their causes and to suggest some of the changes or modifications which will be required to solve them.

COMMAND STRUCTURE - Misalignment and absence of unified control.

In 1980, the United States Army instituted the CAPSTONE program designed to more closely link peacetime planning and training of active and reserve component units to wartime needs in both the continental United States and overseas. Reserve Component PSYOP units were among the first to be fully integrated into the program; and by the end of 1981 virtually every unit in the community had received a specific wartime mission and was actively planning for it. This had some dramatic side effects. As long as their wartime missions remained vague or ill-defined, reserve PSYOP units could afford to focus their training on basic skills and procedures and could spend much of their time meeting administrative and component-generated requirements. The pace for them was relatively slow, requirements were stable and predictable and organizational anachronisms in the reserve command structure were no more than minor irritants. With the advent of CAPSTONE and its subsequent expansion for PSYOP to include contingencies outside of the NATO region, however, the world turned upside down.

A new sense of urgency pervaded the activities of the reserves. Specific missions generated new and urgent planning requirements, new training programs, demands for additional equipment and changes to organization. Most importantly, the requirements generated by CAPSTONE, in turn, generated an urgent need for unified direction and control of the community's efforts akin to that required by PSYOP in wartime. Unfortunately, it is this need which the peacetime reserve command structure has so far been unable to meet.

Organizations, like organisms, adapt very quickly to new environments under pressure, and the PSYOP establishment is no exception. An ad hoc

arrangement has developed to fill the vacuum in the peacetime chain of command; but, while it provides some centralized direction in operational matters, it has created problems at least as serious as those it has solved. As a consequence, there continues to be an urgent need for change to the reserve command structure for PSYOP to accommodate the new pressures.

Even a cursory examination of the current peacetime command structure makes it clear that psyoperators in the reserve component usually don't work for or with other psyoperators. To begin with, each of the three reserve component PSYOP groups are located in a different army area and are therefore subordinate to a different Army (CONUSA) headquarters. Of the three groups, only one is directly subordinate to its immediate Army Reserve Command (ARCOM); the other two are subordinate to Civil Affairs Commands. Only the 7th PSYOP Group at the Presidio of San Francisco, California, exercises direct control over all the PSYOP battalions and companies located within the area assigned to its CONUSA. The 2nd PSYOP Group in Cleveland, Ohio, directly controls only one of the five battalions and three of the ten companies in the Fifth Army area; the remainder are scattered under five different ARCOMs. To further complicate direction and control in the 5th Army area, two of these PSYOP companies are subordinated to an ordnance group in Texas, and another is part of a support group in Arkansas. The 5th PSYOP Group in Washington, DC, itself subordinate to a Civil Affairs Command, controls only one battalion and two companies directly. The remaining four companies in the First Army area are scattered between three ARCOMs and a different Civil Affairs Command.

Finally, within the PSYOP community itself, there are significant differences between current peacetime subordinations and those contemplated for war. Thus, as it now stands, not only do group and battalion headquarters not control all the smaller PSYOP units in their geographic areas,

some of those that they do control pass under the control of another group or battalion in the event of war. It is a real tribute to the flexibility and resilience of the PSYOP Reserve Component that it has been able to make such a convoluted and complex system work at all. In spite of these efforts, however, it has not worked very well.

The current system is having an erosive effect on operational readiness. PSYOP units subordinated to non-PSYOP units or headquarters, and these represent the majority, are generally working for organizations that lack an understanding of and an appreciation for what PSYOP can and should do. These units or headquarters understandably tend to put more emphasis on matters relating to reserve affairs and tidy administration than they do on the planning requirements, training programs and organizational changes generated by CAPSTONE. This has the ultimate effect of skewing both the priorities and the evaluative criteria under which psyoperators must work away from those factors which may affect operational readiness most directly.

This is true even for those units subordinate to Civil Affairs Commands. Traditionally, there has been a strong community of interests between civil affairs and psychological operations; and, in fact, PSYOP was doctrinally under the staff supervision of the G5 for some time. The bond has become much less strong, however, with the change in staff proponency for PSYOP to the G-3 and the consequent emphasis on the use of PSYOP as a combat support function.⁴ Much of what PSYOP units are doing now, particularly in connection with CAPSTONE, is unrelated to civil-military operations and therefore unfamiliar to psyoperators' civil affairs superiors. In effect, then, the problem of misalignment has been complicated by the fact that some subordinate relationships have become anachronistic.

Misalignment has not only affected operational readiness, it has also created high levels of frustration and contributed to a sense of divided loyalties on the part of many reserves. On one hand, reserve PSYOP units, faced with new and often time-sensitive requirements, have begun to fret at the delays in both tasking and response imposed by reserve component command layering. This has placed an added strain on psyoperators' relationships with their non-PSYOP superiors. On the other, many psyoperators are becoming increasingly troubled by the apparent conflict between the demands placed upon their limited training time by CAPSTONE-related activities, and those placed upon it by their component's administrative requirements.

The active component units, for their part, occasionally and unwittingly contribute to this schizophrenia. Faced at once with the need to interact more frequently with their supporting reserve units and with the confusing labyrinth of the reserve command structure, they have frequently bypassed intervening layers in order to deal directly with "their" psyoperators. This tactic, while authorized by FORSCOM, increases the pressure on the PSYOP unit, whose commander must still report his activities to his reserve superiors through his own channels. All in all, misalignment has helped to create an unhappy situation for the reserves, if not for both components.

Predictably, it has also produced a de facto chain of command for operational matters which generally operates outside and occasionally in spite of established reserve channels. The 4th PSYOP Group, the only PSYOP group in the active component, has moved into the vacuum in the peacetime command structure where it has become the senior PSYOP headquarters and serves as a clearing house and practical director for all CAPSTONE-related activity. To the extent that this de facto system provides the needed degree of central control, it has been well nigh indispensable. It has,

however, unfortunately tended to perpetuate the perceived conflict between "operational" and "administrative" requirements. What is worse, it has produced a situation in which the reserve system has progressively less and less knowledge about the activities, requirements and status of many of its members. Even in the interests of increased efficiency and operational readiness, such a situation is clearly unacceptable.

The easiest and simplest solution to the problem would seem to be a reassertion of the primacy of the reserve command structure. In theory, at least, this would restore order, discipline the reserve and create the appearance of a quiet and efficiently functioning component. Like most simple solutions, it will not solve the problem. At the problem's core is change and the effects of change, and the single most significant of these has been the development of the requirement for unified direction and control. The magnitude and complexity of the tasks that CAPSTONE has forced upon the reserves and the length of time involved in their completion dictate the restructuring of the community's organization around some nucleic command and control organization with the responsibility and authority to direct and orchestrate the community's myriad interrelated activities. This principle is accepted as cardinal to the wartime organization of PSYOP assets, and it has become equally vital in peace.⁵ Yet, this is the one requirement the reserve component command structure is least able to supply.

The real and proper solution, it seems, would be a realignment and purification of the command structure for PSYOP to permit it to fulfill this need. In its simplest form, this might be accomplished by creating a supra-PSYOP command to which all reserve PSYOP units might then be subordinated, regardless of their physical location. In theory, this could be achieved without significant dislocation to the existing command structure.

To accomplish the realignment, two Civil Affairs Commands would be required to give up one major subordinate command apiece, and some eight ARCOMs and one other Civil Affairs Command would merely transfer several companies or a battalion, at most.

The creation of such a command and control organization, however, will create some new problems even as it solves existing ones. One of these will be the selection of a senior headquarters, either CONUSA or ARCOM, to which a PSYOP command can logically be subordinated. Another will be its composition, since it will need the assets required to perform both the administrative functions of an ARCOM and to exercise the operational command now the province of the 4th PSYOP Group. A third will be its function in the event of war, since the units it would control in peacetime will then pass to other commands. Finally, even assuming that these problems are soluble, the magnitude of the change involved in creating and empowering such a command may be beyond the capacity of the existing system.

If this is so, while not losing sight of its ideal, the Army might be better advised to consider interim solutions. One of these might be to simply acknowledge and institutionalize the current de facto system by formally vesting the First Special Operations Command (SOCOM) under whose aegis psychological operations functions in peacetime with a modified form of operational command. This, to be effective, would necessarily include not only authority to deal with all matters related to CAPSTONE; but also the responsibility and authority to direct and evaluate training, nominate PSYOP units for participation in major field exercises and to control to some degree the funds available to the reserve PSYOP establishment. Admittedly, SOCOM is not currently capable of assuming these responsibilities; but with dramatic changes in philosophy and attitude, as well as expansion

of its headquarters, the command could provide the guidance and assistance the PSYOP community requires.

To really work, such a transitional arrangement would have to include some features that would simultaneously extend SOCOM's control below group level and give the PSYOP community some degree of operational autonomy within the reserve system. First, of course, the reserve system would need to acknowledge the primacy of the wartime command structure which CAPSTONE has erected within and around the older administrative command relationships. This acknowledgement would have the practical effect of abolishing the annoying and occasionally obstructive differences that now exist between the administrative and the operational chains of command, and would give each group practical control of its subordinates in both areas.

Once this had been done, each group would need to accept the responsibility for developing an annual budget for its organization as a whole, a task now performed for it at ARCOM level. This would require careful and accurate forecasting at group level, and accurate planning at every other in the organization. Then, once each group budget had been reviewed and approved at ARCOM level or higher, the authority to actually expend funds would have to be delegated to the groups. Such authority would provide each group commander with a much greater degree of influence on his subordinates' activities than he now enjoys, and would have the effect of extending SOCOM's authority considerably. At the same time, providing accounting and fund management activities were performed at ARCOM level, each group's activities would remain visible and subject to control. In reality, a system which placed SOCOM or some structurally similar reserve organization vested with operational command at the top of a vertical command structure would not represent a significant departure from what has already taken place. It seems a small step therefore to formalize the

change and add at least the fiscal mechanism which would permit psyoperators to control other psyoperators.

TRAINING - an unresponsive system and insufficient time.

While probably the most debilitating, the problem posed by the absence of unified direction and control is by no means the only one which impedes responsiveness and effectiveness. The problems posed by the current training system have only slightly less serious effects on Reserve Component PSYOP units. Unlike the problems which stem from the command structure, however, training problems are not primarily the result of the demands of CAPSTONE. They are, rather, features of a system which has never acknowledged that PSYOP training is a special case that requires special treatment.

In simple terms, the current training system in the Reserve Component is insensitive to the peculiar needs of PSYOP units: it provides neither the time nor the resources required for adequate training in PSYOP. This is so primarily because two aspects of psychological operations generate unique training requirements. First, true competence in PSYOP, always the fundamental objective of any training effort, requires the investment of extraordinary amounts of time over long periods. Secondly, realism, without which training becomes dull and wooden, requires exercises based upon complex and usually classified scenarios. The current system is configured and equipped to provide neither to the reserves.

Time is the single most important requirement in PSYOP training because the psyoperator must master multiple disciplines. He or she must first learn the basic skills and techniques involved in the development and dissemination of persuasive communications in a wide variety of forms. To be able to employ these skills and techniques, the psyoperator must then study the area of the world in which are found those target audiences upon

which he expects to concentrate. This study is broad, demanding and continuous and includes a detailed examination of the demography, culture, politics, economics and religions of each region within the area. Fundamental to this effort, of course, is a study of language which is in itself an extremely time-consuming activity. These, however, are only the tools with which the psyoperator works. Beyond this, he must acquire skill in the synthesis of reams of unrelated material and judgment in its use, for these attributes are ultimately essential in the conduct of good psychological operations. And, finally, he must also master those skills required of a soldier.

These abilities and skills take time to acquire, but, more importantly from the reserves' point of view, they take a great deal of time to maintain. In the case of basic skills, only one two-week course of formal instruction is offered by the TRADOC system. All additional skills must be acquired and maintained at the unit level. The same is true of language proficiency and area expertise, both of which must compete with the need for work on common soldiers' skills, normal preventive maintenance activities and a host of other administrative duties. The point is simply that training a psyoperator requires a relatively longer period of time and more intense effort than does training a soldier whose function requires him to manipulate fewer disciplines. The corollary is that training distractors and inverted priorities have a disproportionate effect on both training and the time it requires.

The second aspect of PSYOP which generates unique training requirements is the extraordinary difficulty involved in designing realism into training. Realism for PSYOP units depends upon the success with which the psychological dimension of the battlefield can be created. This, in turn,

generally requires the use of scenario-driven exercises based upon a careful analysis of existing conditions and detailed intelligence. By comparison, realism for other type-unit training is easy to achieve. An infantry unit, to train with an acceptable degree of realism, really only needs a training area large enough to accommodate the movement of all its parts. Once in possession of the necessary space, the simplest information about the enemy is sufficient to initiate a problem. The enemy himself need not exist; he must merely be located and his posture described in general terms. The infantry can then attack directly and practice the combination of fire and maneuver needed to destroy him.

A PSYOP unit, on the other hand, does not need a training area. It can practice the tasks associated with its function as a whole or in widely-separated parts, working in virtually any administrative space. To train with reasonable realism, however, the enemy must appear to exist. The psyoperator must have the detailed intelligence necessary to picture the enemy in all his psychological complexity. Only then can he attack the enemy's will to fight indirectly through the subtle manipulation of his hopes, fears, anxieties, resentments and a host of other feelings and perceptions.

To complicate the problem, many of these feelings and perceptions are situational, so information, no matter how detailed, on the general psychological climate is seldom enough. Intelligence must also include detailed data about the political, social and economic conditions in the countries in conflict or crisis. And all the information must be mixed and assembled so as to create a believable psychological dimension which will produce the stimuli needed to elicit a response from those being trained. To create such a situation is no mean feat, but, without it, realistic training is not possible. An infantry unit and a PSYOP unit, while differing widely in

their definition of what constitutes realism in training, are alike in one respect. Both respond badly to unrealistic training. Just as it does not produce good, well-disciplined and confident infantrymen, it does not produce good psyoperators. And in both cases the lack of realism in training ultimately discourages good soldiers and they leave the unit. When a unit loses a trained psyoperator, however, the loss is relatively greater because of the length of time required to train him.

Beyond those aspects of psychological operations which generate unique training requirements, there are other aspects which pose real challenges to the training system. One of these is mobilization and deployment training of PSYOP units, the other is the evaluation of PSYOP training in general. In both of the areas, the system is not currently meeting Reserve Component PSYOP needs.

Because of the nature of their mission, all PSYOP units are programmed to deploy outside of the continental United States in the event of war. All, in fact, are already linked by the expanded CAPSTONE program to forward-based units or overseas organizations. Deployment training, then, almost always requires OCONUS movement. There are, however, stringent regulatory constraints placed both on the frequency with which reserve component units may participate in OCONUS training, and upon the manner in which they are selected for it. Currently, for example, Reserve Component units may not participate in OCONUS deployment training more frequently than every three years, and then only if they meet certain criteria.⁶ Beyond this, the selection of units is so centralized that substantive input to the nominative process from reserve PSYOP units themselves is the exception, rather than the rule.⁷

These regulatory restrictions are logical and prudent in the broad context of the reserve system. The delicate nature of the relationship

between the supporting reserve component and its supported Active Component command, however, amplifies the effect they have on PSYOP organizations. For one thing, the relationship must be far more of an educative process than is the normal support relationship because of the unfamiliarity of most of the Army with PSYOP and its capabilities. For another, the effects of PSYOP are not amenable to measurement by any existing or widely-accepted set of criteria. A commander's willingness to use it may therefore rest as much upon his confidence in the ability of his supporting psyoperators, as it does upon his conviction that PSYOP is a good and useful force multiplier.

Frequency of contact with the supported commander therefore becomes critical to psyoperators. Without it, supported commanders cannot develop the understanding and confidence necessary to employ PSYOP effectively, and the supporting psyoperators cannot develop the ability to anticipate their requirements or understand their priorities. The key, of course, is frequent exercise. This, however, invariably means frequent OCONUS deployment of at least cells and teams, if not the whole unit, and that is extremely difficult under present circumstances.

Nor is the system meeting the requirement for good responsive evaluation of training in the case of reserve component PSYOP units. This problem is currently under study and does not warrant lengthy consideration in all its aspects here. It is, however, an area in which deficiencies continue to seriously degrade reserve component performance. There is, for example, no Skill Qualification Test (SQT) for enlisted psyoperators, and no tracked SQTs for any of the standard MOSs most heavily used in PSYOP. The Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP), a relatively recent publication, remains unsupported by any consolidated individual task lists. Training devices and simulations do not exist, and PSYOP has so far completely eluded the Army Standardization Program.⁸ The cumulative effect of

the absence of these evaluative tools is to permit widely varying interpretation of training requirements and dramatic fluctuations in standards of performance. Neither contributes to professional development or operational readiness.

Unlike the problems growing from the command structure, there does not appear to be a solution to those which stem from the training system which can be represented as anything like ideal. Any solution will have to begin with at least the tacit recognition that PSYOP training is a special case, and proceed incrementally from there.

Time, or the lack thereof, can be dealt with by making more available, reducing the demands that are unrelated to training and by devising ways to use whatever is or becomes available more effectively. More can be made available within the current system by giving PSYOP units a more generous allowance of Additional Training Assemblies (ATA), and reducing some of the restrictions surrounding their use.⁹ More can also be made available by authorizing additional Unit Training Assemblies (UTA) per quarter or on an annual basis. The precedent already exists for such an authorization in both airborne and artillery units.¹⁰ Fragmented or modular Active Training (AT) can also have the practical effect of increasing the time available for training. If it were made the norm for all reserve PSYOP units, it would permit commanders to take advantage of team or detachment training activities which they might otherwise have had to forego. If judiciously used, it would also provide the capability to respond to short-notice planning and exercise preparation requirements, something which the reserve PSYOP units do not now have.

The need for more time can also be accommodated by reducing existing pressures upon what is already available. First, and perhaps most importantly, reserve component missions should be reviewed with particular

attention to dual missions. PSYOP units, whether reserve or active, are necessarily specialized by region and the burden of acquiring and maintaining the necessary area expertise and linguistic abilities has already been described. To expect a PSYOP unit, particularly a reserve unit, to develop and maintain the skills necessary to operate in two or more different regions of the world is unreasonable and unrealistic. The narrowing and focusing of unit missions wherever possible will therefore help to reduce pressures on existing time, particularly in the case of units with dual missions.

Then, the tasks currently assigned to Reserve Component units should be rigorously examined and those which do not contribute directly to operational readiness should be ruthlessly eliminated. The preparation of basic and special psychological operations studies, for example, is not an appropriate task under this criterion. Reserve units cannot do more than a superficial job on such large and extended research tasks without herculean effort; and the time, resources and personnel devoted to them are not available for any other duties. In point of fact, reserve unit members would derive as much training benefit and area knowledge from the development of shorter more narrowly focused target analyses.

Finally, pressure upon existing time can be alleviated through judicious use of the expanded Full Time Manning (FTM) program. FTM personnel, for example, can be used to accomplish those time-consuming administrative duties associated with maintenance, supply and personnel functions, freeing reserve members to train. The beneficial effect of the FTM program, however, is temperate at best for PSYOP. It does not always provide the intended relief, particularly in very small units like those in PSYOP. Here, FTM personnel, particularly when single-slotted into key positions in a unit, block normal career progression among the reserve members of that

unit. This, in turn, forces qualified personnel out of the unit and works against the very effect the FTM program was intended to produce.

Better use can be made of available time at every level of training. At the core of the system, a rigorous examination of both the resident and corresponding courses of formal instruction offered by the Institute for Military Assistance is in order. While the current courses are excellent introductions to the terminology and process involved in PSYOP, they are widely perceived as too general in nature. They may require restructure and expansion, both to increase their relevance to post-CAPSTONE issues, and to reduce the amount of time now spent teaching and re-teaching basic and intermediate skills at the unit level.

Realistic and standardized training exercises for teams and detachments would also help reserve units to use time more productively. Already laboring under extraordinarily heavy burdens, reserve PSYOP units do not generally have the time or resources to develop and promulgate the complex training materials required for realistic training. They are, however, reduced to trying to do so by the absence of any such material produced elsewhere. The results, while representative of honest effort, are not very good and contribute more than a little to the fluctuation in standards of performance. Additionally, the time spent generating the material is time spent not training.

Here again, the First Special Operations Command is the logical candidate for the lead in such an effort. With support from TRADOC, FORSCOM and the reserves themselves, SOCOM might assume proponency for the development of a series of exportable self-contained team and detachment training packages tailored for use during the standard Multiple Unit Training Assemblies (MUTA). Not only would these permit reserve units to make better use

of their time, they would also help to standardize training and to provide some universal evaluative criteria.

By themselves, however, training packages would not be enough. Relaxation of the restrictions on the frequency of OCONUS deployment training for PSYOP units is also needed to insure that vital exercise opportunities are not lost. Additionally, the opportunity which would thereby become available to deploy even cells or teams more frequently to supported units would significantly improve both the training of the reserves and the quality of their product.

EQUIPMENT - too little and too old.

Directly related and actively contributing to training problems is the problem of equipment deficiency. The resurgence of interest in PSYOP which began in late 1979 and the additional resources the community has received as a consequence have helped to ameliorate the situation slightly, but it remains on the critical list. Simply put, most of the equipment is obsolescent, if not obsolete, and there is not enough of it to go around.

To begin with, PSYOP-peculiar equipment is in extremely low density. With only twelve battalions and twenty-two companies, the establishment is tiny in comparison with any other element of the combat support forces. Then, the practical effect of the deemphasis of PSYOP in the post-Vietnam period was to suspend all research, development and equipment acquisition activities indefinitely. As a result, the majority of the equipment was approaching obsolescence by the early 1970s.¹¹ As the equipment grew older and normal wear out and attrition further decreased its density, supply support, maintenance and replacement items all dwindled steadily. Knowledge of PLL and ASL requirements also gradually eroded, and what had been a barely adequate inventory in 1969 was wholly inadequate ten years later. Active Component units, faced with an almost total absence of expertise in

their DS/GS maintenance units, resorted to expedient repair, local contractors and even cannibalization to retain a marginal operational capability.

This situation has changed for the better in the Active Component under the impetus of a recent equipment modernization program. It has not changed, however, for the vast majority of the reserves. Currently, fully sixty percent of the Reserve Component units authorized tactical military public address systems either do not have them or are equipped with inoperable or nonmaintainable systems. Another thirty percent of the reserves authorized light printing plants do not have them, and the situation is often worse in the case of a number of other end items of PSYOP-peculiar equipment. To fully equip those units committed to the Central Command (CENTCOM) for a recent exercise, for example, one reserve group drew down the equipment inventories of its uncommitted subordinates to the point at which none could meet their own contingency missions.

Predictably, these deficiencies add significantly to the training problem for many reserve units. It is extremely difficult to simulate a printing press. More importantly, however, these deficiencies have serious implications for operational readiness. In effect, every capability attributed to PSYOP units remains problematical until each has all the equipment required for its performance.

The simplest solution is to buy more equipment and distribute it as speedily as possible. This is underway, and in many cases commercial items are available to fill the gaps left by a decade or more of neglect. Quick purchases of off-the-shelf items will buy the time needed to rejuvenate the research, development and acquisition cycle; and it will ultimately solve the immediate problem of equipment deficiencies. The larger, underlying problems will require more effort and considerably more consideration.

One of these is the problem of managing low density items of equipment in general. This is not a problem peculiar to PSYOP, but it is one which is uniquely disabling because virtually all PSYOP-peculiar equipment falls into this category. A better army-wide system is needed, from which PSYOP will benefit as one among many.

A related problem peculiarly irritating to the reserves is that of equipment visibility. This problem requires immediate action, and it must begin with the PSYOP units themselves. The first and most important step in its solution is the formal identification of those items of equipment which are mission essential. Once this has been done, the reserve command structure must be sensitized and urged to incorporate PSYOP-peculiar mission essential items into its own intensive management systems. Finally, some formal system with its focal point at SOCOM should be established which would provide a mechanism within the community both for monitoring the completeness and health of the entire family of PSYOP equipment, and for taking quick action to solve the problems too small to engage the larger system.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLEXITY - overspecialization, proliferation and confusion.

The problems stemming from or associated with the command structure, the training system and the equipment inventory are largely systemic ones, and, as such, require systemic solutions. There is another, however, that is primarily structural and which contributes in some measure to the severity of all the others. PSYOP units have become victims of a self-imposed specialization which has left them structurally complex, organizationally opaque to non-psyoperators, and, in some cases, ill-fitted to perform their missions. Admittedly, some of this is due to the CAPSTONE program and the high relief into which it has thrown mission requirements. It is, however, in larger proportion due to a gradual community drift away from its own

organizational premises, a process which has been going on for years. It is clearly up to the community to discipline itself and, in the process to simplify and streamline its own organizations.

The organizational premises of PSYOP are relatively simple. PSYOP units are basically clusters of specialized teams, varying in size from three to over twenty people. The Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) of the company, battalion and group specify the number and type of the teams authorized each organization. Each unit may then be tailored for a particular mission or type of operation by varying the number of attached teams. This cellular system, when used properly, gives a commander the flexibility to meet virtually any mission requirement efficiently and quickly. In practice, however, these organizational premises have been regularly abused.

Currently, there are twenty-seven type teams and nine different established MTOEs among PSYOP organizations. Equipment authorizations vary from unit to unit, and the organizations of Active and Reserve Component units differ significantly from one another, although the missions assigned both are similar in many cases. Some Reserve Component units have become narrowly specialized as a whole and are organized and trained to perform operations which are more properly the province of teams or, at most, detachments. Other reserve units lack the teams required to perform their missions effectively. In effect, the community has evolved into an aggregate of largely separate entities, each slightly different from most of the others and each justifying its structure on the strength of criteria which may or may not be mission-relevant.

The resulting plethora of organizations has become largely incomprehensible to planners and those responsible for structuring contingency

response forces. It is no wonder, then, that PSYOP units are often assigned in inappropriate or inadequate combinations. This organizational opacity also contributes to and helps to perpetuate the widespread lack of understanding of PSYOP capabilities, and may tend to create unrealistic expectations in the minds of supported commanders. It seriously complicates the equipping or reequipping problem since at present there is no common widely-understood Basis of Issue for many items of equipment. Finally, it is wasteful in an era of constrained resources. Clearly, a thorough housecleaning is in order.

The solution is fairly straightforward. The community, and particularly the reserve PSYOP units, must agree to sacrifice the comfort and reassurance of the old narrow and finely-tuned specialization to obtain the flexibility and multiple capabilities that are required of them by CAPSTONE. The number of type units must be reduced, the structure of each type must be simplified to the maximum extent possible, and the organizational result must be made common to both the Active and Reserve Components. This will have the cumulative effect of rationalizing and streamlining PSYOP organization. More importantly, it will reestablish the requirements of mission as the critical organizational parameter.

Some cautionary observations are in order. The simplification and redesign, while badly needed, must be accomplished very carefully and in full knowledge of their potential impact on the reserves. The two principal reserve concerns which must be considered are training and personnel retention. Reserve PSYOP units are frequently located at some distance from one another, and, with a few exceptions, at a considerable distance from their controlling PSYOP headquarters. The 2nd PSYOP Group in Cleveland, Ohio, for example, has subordinates in Kentucky, while the 7th PSYOP Group, located near San Francisco, has subordinates in both Washington and

Colorado. Any restructuring must therefore make units that are not colocated with other PSYOP units or headquarters self-sufficient for training or relocate them. It might, for example, seem eminently logical to an active component force designer to centralize support and maintenance or printing functions in type companies, assuming that one of each type would always be part of every PSYOP group. If, however, either of these type units were located by mischance in the reserve structure at a great distance from all other PSYOP units, training would become virtually impossible. Redesigners must also consider carefully the impact of any new structure on reserve ability to retain qualified personnel. This is particularly critical for PSYOP units because of the impact such losses have on unit efficiency. Here, restructuring or relocation must be accomplished in ways that minimize personnel out-migration in search of promotion or the disappearance of trained assets into the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS - absent and badly-needed.

Finally, there is a fundamental problem which underlies all of those examined so far, and one which ultimately may prove to be the least tractable of all. It is not exclusively a reserve problem, but, since the reserves must share in its solution, it deserves discussion herein. Simply stated, the problem rests in the fact that there is no mechanism in the community which defines and articulates professional standards of excellence, conveys them to the community as a whole, and ultimately enforces them.

This is not to say that standards of performance do not exist; they do. They are documented in FM 33-1, Psychological Operations, in the ARTEP and in fragmentary form throughout the several Soldiers' Manuals which cover the Military Occupational Specialties employed in the conduct of

PSYOP. An even larger, though less easily quantified, volume of information about what should be done and how to do it exists in the literature which discusses these operations. There is even a body of scientific and semi-scientific principle drawn in large part from the behavioral sciences which constitutes the technical substructure that legitimizes many of the techniques and procedures that psyoperators use. Taken together, these resources establish the standards by which mechanical performance can be measured in peacetime with considerable accuracy.

Nor should it be inferred that the community, active or reserve, is not continually making strenuous efforts to improve both its collective performance and that of its individual members. Such efforts are an integral part of training, and will remain so. They can be improved by the development and institution of devices like the standardized training exercises suggested herein; but, with or without such aids, leaders and commanders in PSYOP will always seek to establish and meet higher standards.

The existence of standards of performance and of constant efforts to meet and exceed them are not ultimately enough. The community as a whole must go one step farther and provide its members some credible indices of what is good or bad about their products. It is the product which ultimately produces the effect, or fails to do so. The topicality of the leaflet, the persuasiveness of the broadcast, or the relevance of the newspaper article are what truly determine the effectiveness of a PSYOP unit, not its ability to follow production procedures or to maintain its equipment. An artillery unit which performs its drills flawlessly, but cannot put rounds on target is not considered a professional organization. By the same token, a PSYOP unit which cannot produce a predictable effect over time in a given target audience will also be justifiably and accu-

rately considered unprofessional. Herein, however, lies the crux of the problem for psyoperators. Proof of effectiveness and, by extrapolation, measurement of excellence is relatively easy to acquire for artillery units. It is immensely more difficult to acquire for PSYOP units.

That this is so has always been the PSYOP community's response when questioned or called upon to defend its inertia. The community and its leadership have come to accept and apply as axiomatic Kellen's dictum on Vietnam that ". . . no amount of analysis, no matter how sophisticated, can ever truly prove what the effects of psywar were."¹² In so doing, the leadership has abrogated one of its principal professional responsibilities, and reinforced the perception among many that PSYOP is unreliable and of questionable value. What commander in the last analysis is willing to devote much time or many resources to an organization which not only cannot reliably predict the effects of its activities, but which admits itself incapable of establishing comprehensible standards of excellence for its practitioners? The establishment of those standards, or the serious attempt to do so, would be a significant step for both active and reserve components toward both credibility and wider acceptance, and the PSYOP community would be well-advised to take it. Without it, no amount of tinkering with command structure, training, equipment inventories or unit organization will do more than frost a stale cake.

There are at least three essential preconditions to the task of establishing such a body of standards by which PSYOP unit effectiveness may be measured in peacetime. First, the community as a whole must accept the fact that measuring the effectiveness of units by the quality of their products is largely a matter of judgment. It cannot be otherwise for even the shreds of evidence which occasionally attest to the efficacy of a

campaign in wartime are unavailable to the psyoperator in peace. Secondly, the community must acknowledge that this exercise of judgment and its educative effect is critical to success and should be given the highest priority of any collective task. And, finally, the community must accept the responsibility for developing a mechanism by which this judgment can be rendered, its results communicated and the body of derivative standards collected and enforced.¹³

Here again, SOCOM is logically placed to take the lead in the effort to establish such a mechanism. It is unlikely to be able to do so, however, without both a broadening and deepening of its own in-house PSYOP expertise and the personnel increases discussed in connection with the solution to the command and training problems. Failing such increases, or perhaps in addition to them, the PSYOP community must take a hand in the process.

The range of alternatives open to the community is limited. Actual testing of its products on sample audiences is a practical impossibility for a variety of reasons. The sensitivity of the products, themselves, make any other public process an imprudent choice. Individual judgments by staffs, or even "experts," are not likely to have much force or to achieve consensual acceptance, and are therefore generally unhelpful. Perhaps the best of the few alternatives available is the institution of a larger and much more powerful version of the Review Board often employed as a matter of course at unit level.¹⁴ Drawing its membership from the most experienced and respected members of the community and convening quietly and periodically, it might render a collective judgment on each of the products produced in support of each of the actual planning efforts then underway. These judgments, and the underlying rationale, would become a set of indices of excellence which, while admittedly highly subjective, would help

the community take the essential first step toward wider credibility and acceptance.

Any mechanism, and particularly a review board, must include reserve participation. Reserve units not only constitute the bulk of the service PSYOP assets, they are the repository for most of the expertise and experience available in military psychological operations. Active Component psyoperators pass through the handfull of active units very rapidly, often acquiring only a superficial knowledge of the business. Most do not return. The reserves, on the other hand, in many cases become highly specialized psyoperators and often remain within the same group for an entire career. As such, they acquire knowledge and experience without which any mechanism designed to develop and articulate standards of excellence for the community as a whole would be poor indeed.

CONCLUSION

All things considered, Reserve Component PSYOP units face some serious and unique problems. Involved in planning efforts and operations which depend in large part upon unified direction and control, their peacetime command structures are divided and fragmented in half-a-dozen different ways. Faced with complex training and planning tasks that require diligent application and concentration over lengthy periods, they are tied to a relatively inflexible unit training system which often emphasizes administrative tidiness at the expense of operational readiness. The priorities under which they conduct their day-to-day activities are often skewed, they are seriously underequipped and their unit organization has not caught up with the demands of current tasks and missions. Finally, but not least important, they lack the tools necessary to evaluate their work fairly and completely.

On its face, the litany of problems is long and discouraging. The future, however, is not entirely without hope. CAPSTONE has thrown many of the community's deficiencies and shortcomings into high relief, and made them the focus of concern and vastly increased attention. At the same time, recent changes in the international environment have done much to rekindle an interest in the potential of psychological operations. These developments, in their turn, have brought increased resources and fresh perspectives to bear on the community's problems, and have helped to initiate the long climb back.

Much more, however, is required if the United States is to have available the highly-trained and sophisticated military PSYOP establishment it requires to tip the balance in its favor across the spectrum of conflict. And the existing division of forces between the Active and Reserve Components dictates that a large percentage of the time, resources and attention will have to go to the reserves. Lacking such emphasis, any efforts at rehabilitation or enhancement will ultimately only benefit the smaller part of the PSYOP community and will produce only marginal increases in the effectiveness of the whole.

There is one final point to be made: whether the changes suggested herein are made or not, the debate about the effectiveness of PSYOP as a weapon will assuredly continue. Its supporters will continue to urge its use and tout its efficacy, its detractors will continue to ignore or dismiss it. What both sides overlook in their zeal to defend their respective positions are the serious consequences of failure. Failure to use PSYOP may mean defeat, but the use of bad or amateurish PSYOP may be equally dangerous. Some respected observers assert without qualification that this is the case, and that PSYOP when used improperly or injudiciously actually lengthens and aggravates conflicts.¹⁵ If this is so, and considerable

weight of evidence suggests that it may be, dealing quickly and efficiently with the PSYOP community's problems and in particular with those of the Reserve Component must assume a new urgency and importance.

ENDNOTES

1. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Renewal of Strategy," in The Strategic Imperative: New Policies for American Security (Cambridge: Ballinger, 1982), ed. by Samuel P. Huntington, pp. 14-21.
2. Bernard Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age (Princeton: University Press, 1965), pp. 312-14.
3. Huntington, p. 50.
4. See, US Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5, Operations, Washington, 20 August 1982, pp. 7-22 and 7-23.
5. Ibid., p. 7-23. All PSYOP units are part of a PSYOP command, with its headquarters at theater-level, to insure the integration and consistency of the theater PSYOP effort.
6. For these criteria, see US Department of the Army, Army Regulation 350-9: Reserve Component Oversea Deployment Training with Active Component Commands, Washington, 1 October 1981, para 8, p. 3.
7. Nomination and selection processes are described in US Department of the Army, HQ, US Army Forces Command, FORSCOM Supplement 1 to AR 350-9: Reserve Component Oversea Deployment Training (RC ODT) with Active Component Commands, Ft. McPherson, GA, 15 December 1981, App. D.
8. US Department of the Army, Army Regulation 350-1: Army Training, Washington, 1 August 1981, Chap. 5.
9. Additional Training Assemblies (ATA) are dealt with in detail in US Department of the Army, Army Regulation 140-1: Army Reserve Mission, Organization and Training, Washington, 1 April 1983, para 3-14, p. 3-7.
10. Ibid., para. 3-4f, p. 3-3.
11. The Army Concept Team in Vietnam (ACTIV) recommended that priority be given to the improvement of PSYOP material and equipment and that several staple items of this equipment be replaced immediately in June, 1969. See US Department of the Army, Army Concept Team in Vietnam, Employment of US Army Psychological Operations Units in Vietnam (ACTIV Project No. ACG-47F), HQ, USARV, 7 June 1969, Section IV, p. IV-2.
12. Konrad Kellen, "War on the Mind: A commentary," Armed Forces and Society, Winter 1980, p. 320.

13. While little or nothing has been written on the development of standards, much reporting has been devoted to the measurement of the effects of PSYOP under various conditions. See US Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 525-7-2, The Art and Science of Psychological Operations: Case Studies of Military Application (Washington, 1976), Vol. 2, Chap 9.

14. The review board widely used at battalion and below is an expedient method for pretesting unit products. In the absence of representatives of the actual target audiences, group consultation is used as a check on quality and effectiveness. For details on technique, See US Department of the Army, Field Manual 33-1, Psychological Operations, Washington, 31 August 1979, Chap. 11.

15. Kellen, pp. 323-24.

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